

PERFORMANCE-BASED DATA MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2003

Providing Accurate and Timely Data on the Effectiveness of Educational Programs and Achievement Trends in America's Schools

The Performance-Based Data Management Initiative (PBDMI) is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the States, and local education and industry partners to improve the quality and timeliness of education information. The initiative will produce an Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN), providing States and the federal government the capacity to transfer and analyze information about education programs. When fully implemented, EDEN will not only provide timely performance data to aid education decision makers but also streamline the data collection process and reduce the reporting burden on grantees.

PBDMI PARTNERSHIPS

Site Visits to State Educational Agencies: From April through September 2003, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and its subcontractor, Evaluation Software Publishing, Inc., conducted State site visits for PBDMI. Jointly with ED officials, they visited each State Educational Agency (SEA), the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to discuss PBDMI data transfer.

The visits were deemed highly successful. Conclusions drawn from the visits included

- States appreciated the personal visits that provided them an opportunity to review and document their data sources and definitions.
- States are interested in and supportive of making the transition to consolidated electronic submissions of data to ED.
- All States are using automated systems in some way to collect data from school districts.
- There is virtually universal agreement that an individual student record system at the State Educational Agency level is a necessity.
- States desire early and detailed specifications and technical assistance for the data to be submitted to PBDMI.

The site visits revealed that all States will be ready to submit data to PBDMI in October 2004, albeit with some significant limitations. Every State has data that are readily accessible and well formatted for submission, and each has work to do to compile and submit a more complete file. Regarding the States' data and data elements

- Many States' data are readily available.
- Assessment and accountability data are "in hand," but are new to the States and present new challenges for them to process and report.
- Some areas will require States to make changes in their collection or reporting processes, including highly qualified teacher data and student and teacher level course data.
- States with individual student records and those moving in that direction will have increasing capacity to derive the PBDMI statistics over time.
- States do not collect some data that they perceive as unneeded by them.
- Some data elements are not collected or defined the same way by all States.

"This is a much needed and long overdue initiative. We strongly commend the current leadership...at the USED to move this initiative forward."

Matthew Cohen, Ph.D.

Ohio Department of Education

Providing Technical Assistance: ED's Cooperative System Contract will provide each State up to \$50,000 for their efforts to supply data to PBDMI. These funds will enhance each State's capacity to integrate PBDMI into an accountability program; to interpret, analyze, and report PBDMI data; and to make PBDMI data more accessible to State and local policy makers, school administrators, classroom teachers, and the general public. ED has also established technical assistance contracts with CCSSO, Evaluation Software Publishing, and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) to help States participate in the PBDMI Pilot test and EDEN development. For more information, go to <http://evalsoft.com/pbdmi>.

TESTING THE SYSTEM

The steps necessary to begin testing the Decision Support System (DSS)—the pilot application of what will become EDEN—have been completed. The data elements have been aligned with State practice, and OMB approved the pilot transmission of the revised elements under the Paperwork Elimination Act. Concurrently, ED contractors finished the initial data model for the DSS. The model includes the final pilot test data elements—the common data elements for State formula grants, the NCES Common Core of Data, and the Civil Rights Survey—identified by merging ED’s information needs with those the States can provide. The model also includes business rules for use of the data and a data dictionary. It is flexibly designed to allow for changes and expansion of data requirements as additional needs are identified.

From October 13 through November 1, 2003, the DSS is being tested for States that volunteer to submit their data early. The testing will allow time for the technical group to evaluate the system and determine if the data that SEAs send are workable. The results of the testing will be summarized and provided to the PBDMI Task Force in early November. For specifications on the pilot data transmission, see <http://141.156.28.167/PBDMIPortal/>.

PREPARING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Phase 1 Pilot: Data collection from all States will begin on November 15 and continue through December 15, 2003. All States that receive PBDMI Cooperative System funds will be expected to participate in the pilot.

During the pilot phase, SEAs will be supported by technical assistance contacts to answer questions and to help address technical issues. The PBDMI Portal (<http://141.156.28.167/PBDMIPortal/>) will also be supplied with downloads of the data elements, file formats, technical data, announcements, a discussion database, and results of the DSS test. Periodic updates will provide PBDMI contacts with additional information as needed.

Data collected in the pilot submission will be reviewed for data quality between December 15, 2003 and February 15, 2004. Results will be shared at the 17th Annual MIS Conference, February 25-27, 2004 at the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel and Waterfront Conference Center, Portsmouth, Va.

Ongoing Implementation: Beginning in the spring of 2004, PBDMI will address program finance data and common data elements for discretionary grants. CCSSO, Evaluation Software Publishing, and ED officials will conduct another round of State site visits to determine the availability of this next level of data elements to be collected from the States.

Financial Data Elements: ED has hired a contractor to develop common financial data elements for PBDMI. The goal is to create a “common book of knowledge” which will assist the federal government in finding out how money is allocated within the States. To accomplish this task, ED is expecting to need the DUNS numbers of recipients. Recent Federal regulation has required DUNS numbers for all recipients of federal grants and contracts. Consequently, DUNS numbers have been added to the November 2003 data collection. Analyses will be ongoing regarding the availability of data for the federal grant expenditures at the State and local school levels.

On the Horizon: We expect the EDEN data transmission to go live in the fall of 2004 with data available from the repository in Spring 2005. Ultimately, the system will allow data collected through EDEN to be viewed at three levels. Level 1 will contain raw data designed for research use only. Individuals will need prior clearance to view raw data. Level 2 will incorporate the use of query tools allowing users of the system to ask and answer questions. This view will be available to the public. Level 3 will feature a sophisticated query section. Users at this level will be able to pose more complex questions and receive more technical answers. All data will be provided in a manner not to reveal private information or personal identity.

Getting Ready for EDEN: ED has hired a contractor to analyze its current internal business processes and develop guidance for a smooth transition to its desired future state—an “EDEN-friendly” business environment.

Stay tuned for more information in future editions of the PBDMI newsletter.

For more information
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